

## **Lincoln School Parents' Association Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 8:40am.

### **Principal's Report:**

Kate Scanlon provided a brief update on her attendance at the School Climate Meeting in Waltham where the topic of bullying was discussed. Kate reported that 21 of Lincoln's 22 teachers are trained in Open Circle practices, and the Michael Fallon presentation, to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> for grades 3-5, will allow the staff to incorporate content and follow-up activities into the classrooms.

Kate also reported that, in addition to the goals of the school improvement plan, playground and traffic are still two outstanding issues to resolve. The School Committee has met with the town on traffic safety and enforcement. As an aside, Kate informed the association that idling laws will be more strictly enforced by the town (specifics will be communicated.)

This year, there will be a combination Math/Science Night where families can come in and participate in events, but timing and overall organization are not yet set. Laura Krotky, Co-Chair of the Enrichment Committee, volunteered her committee to set the date and run and organize the event. There is a plan to hold a Health Fair in the school for the students. Andrea Cogan and Lynn Vozella will lead this event, and it will be held on February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Friday before the Winter break.

During this discussion of events, Bridget Stump mentioned that with the music teacher out on maternity leave, Lincoln would most likely not hold a May Day event, although there will be a March concert.

Finally, Kate covered much information regarding the MCAS, sharing performance over the last 2 years, some illustrations of the test, and the plans the school has to support the students in this school year. The last two years of performance for grades 3-5, compared to the ~1000 classrooms tested in Massachusetts and to the other Winchester schools, was passed out. From 2008 to 2009, performance generally improved for Lincoln classrooms. Focus areas year over year centered on math and open response in the English (composition). Kate emphasized strongly that it is not Lincoln's philosophy to "teach to the test," but rather to present the test formats in the class to create familiarity and comfort with the test so as to reduce anxiety among the students. Where appropriate, they are also identifying specific areas that need support and can be worked into the curriculum. For the MCAS test this year, the length of the test will be shortened as they are removing the trial questions.

### **Lynn Vozella, School Nurse, on Flu Q&A:**

Lynn was present to answer specific questions any parents had regarding the seasonal and H1N1 flu. A few pieces of information she shared are as follows:

- Students will need a booster for H1N1 28 days after the initial vaccine if they are under the age of 10, and the school will administer this to students who get the initial vaccine in the schools. However, if students received an H1N1 vaccine outside the school, they will need to get the booster outside of school as well.
- If a child has already been sick, the Board of Health recommends he/she still get the vaccine, as there are high false negative rates (60-70%) on the swab test.
- Any questions or concerns, Lynn suggested calling Kathy Whittaker at the Board of Health – 781-721-7121
- As of Tuesday (the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nov), there were no hospitalizations reported and only a few secondary infections reported from the flu, all with very positive recovery prognoses. The number of sick students has declined as well: Lincoln peaked on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> at 55 students out, but by the 10<sup>th</sup>, the number out dropped to 40. They are anticipating a decline by December, but are worried that we will see another spike in January.
- To be safe, Lynn is sending students home with a fever of 99.2°F or higher, which is lower than the normal cut-off.
- Children are getting a bit panicky about the flu, so Lynn wanted parents to be aware and be prepared to allay fears.

The LSPA thanked Lynn for her hard work and going above and beyond to manage this effort so well and keep everyone informed.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Committee Report:**

Lynn Phillips reported that the babysitting service during conferences ran smoothly, and the option of pre-registration was successful. An ice cream social will be held during the Book Fair on November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm in the cafeteria. An ice skating rink has been booked for an event on January 27<sup>th</sup> – more details to follow. Also, the Pancake Breakfast is planned for January 23<sup>rd</sup> – more details to follow on that.

The Growing Up and Reaching Out Committee met last week. Their focus is on community-based activities in which the 5<sup>th</sup> graders can give back to the greater Winchester and Boston-area communities. They have lots of activities identified, including the Mission of Deeds Drive, a clothing drive in Somerville, and gift-wrapping at the Pine Street Inn in December.

They are working on a bulletin board in the cafeteria to showcase the 5<sup>th</sup> grade activities. There are also plans to gather pictures and write an article for the Winchester Star.

### **Secretary's Report:**

The minutes from the LSPA meeting held on October 8, 2009 were distributed and approved.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer's report ending October 31 was reviewed and approved. October was an overall quiet month. The closing balance at the end of the month was \$36,746.09. The Welcome Back Dinner is showing a slight deficit, but Susan Fagerstrom was not certain why. She suggested investigating pricing and making sure adjustments are made for next year if necessary. Revenue from the Direct Appeal still lags behind last year by ~\$1,700 as per the Balance Sheet.

Linda McDonough gave a huge thank you to Susan for completing the tax filing! This is a major undertaking – many other schools have a dedicated parent who's a tax specialist to do this job. Linda asked the association to recommend a tax specialist if they know of one, and the LSPA will place a notice on the web site.

More updated numbers on the Direct Appeal show \$16,470 contributed to-date with 41% of families participating. The current estimate is to reach ~\$18,000 by the end of November, compared to \$22,000 by end of November last year. Discussion ensued and volunteers were identified to man a Direct Appeal table at the Book Fair/Ice Cream Social. The goal is to get at least 60% participation at any amount level. There was also discussion to try incentives (e.g., raffle for prizes) if people contribute at certain events like the Book Fair, but no final decision was made.

Please refer to the Treasurer's Report dated 10/31/09 for further details about revenue and expenses.

### **Co-President's Report:**

Bridget Stump made a request on behalf of Andrea Cogan for a parent volunteer for the Health Fair on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested should email Andrea at [acogan@winchester.k12.ma.us](mailto:acogan@winchester.k12.ma.us)

Bridget also emphasized that help, ideas, and volunteers will be needed and greatly appreciated for the Math/Science Fair. Bridget was going to check on the existence of materials from the previous Fairs to help with the planning.

A suggestion was made to create a "Volunteers Needed!" box on the LSPA web site to keep all requests and volunteer opportunities in one place. Bridget said she would discuss the feasibility of this with Chuck Pickelhaupt.

With Kate Scanlon's oversight and support, there is a need for parents to join and spearhead a Playground Task Force. These parents would be tasked with researching the current situation and investigating solutions to make the playgrounds better. The real goal is to "think big!" and not be constrained by capital considerations at this time, meet with students (utilizing the student council?), and research local and urban playgrounds to establish benchmarks and ideas. Kicking off this work in January would be ideal, so if anyone is interested, please contact Linda McDonough or Bridget Stump.

There were 3 PISC updates from Linda and Bridget. First, the superintendent stated that there are no plans to close schools due to flu, and any rumors are unfounded. Second, there was agreement that when possible, the LSPA should try to tie in enrichment activities and events with the town et al (e.g., when booking a performer, check with the town or other schools to gauge interest and combine funds) to stretch resources. And third, Linda and Bridget brought [www.wincentral.org](http://www.wincentral.org) to the attention of the LSPA as another good source of information and communication. This is a central listing of town events that is being run by the local businesses. One can sign up on line or get a hard copy at the bookstore – they are also on twitter.

#### **General Announcements:**

November 30<sup>th</sup> is "Midnight Madness" in Winchester, where many businesses are open late (some until 2am) and great deals can be found. Come on out and support our local businesses!

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Shepard.